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Articles:

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Yomiuri:

- (1) Exports of unmanned helicopters: Sounding the alarm against business transactions with China
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- (1) Promotion of road construction plan indicates reform being stripped of meaning
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3) Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei)

Prime Minister's schedule, February 7

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

08:11

Met at Kantei with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Nagase.

09:00

Attended a Lower House Budget Committee meeting.

12:05

Arrived at Kantei.

13:00

Returned to the Lower House Budget Committee meeting.

17:42

Met Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe at Kantei.

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17:57

Had a haircut at the barbershop "Muragi" in the Capital Tokyo Hotel.

20:25

Returned to his official residence.

4) Japan-DPRK talks: No progress on abduction and security issues; North Korea accuses NGOs supporting North Korean defectors

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

Takaharu Yoshiyama, Kyoji Fukushima, Beijing

In the talks yesterday at a Beijing hotel, Japanese and North Korean government officials dealt again with the Japanese abductees issue in the afternoon meeting. The Japanese negotiators strongly demanded that North Korea take action quickly to return abductees to Japan, shed light on the truth of the abduction issue and hand former North Korean agent Sin Guang Su over to Japan. But the North Korean team did not accept these requests.

The abduction issue was discussed again yesterday, following the session on Feb. 5. Because there was no progress on the issue in the previous talks, the Japanese team demanded that the issue be discussed again. The talks yesterday was taken part in by Kunio Umeda, deputy director-general of the Foreign Ministry's Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau and other officials from Japan and Kim Chol Ho, deputy director of the North Korean Foreign Ministry's Asian Bureau and other officials from the North.

In response to Japan's requests, North Korean officials raised doubts about Japan's DNA analysis of the ashes North Korea had provided to Japan as Megumi Yokota's and demanded they be returned to the North swiftly.

Moreover, the North Korean negotiators accused people concerned with non-governmental organizations supporting North Korean defectors, arguing, "North Koreans are being kidnapped in areas near the China-North Korea border." They named seven NGO members, for instance, Hiroshi Kato, secretary general of the Life Funds for North Korean Refugees and Kansai University Prof. Lee Young Hwa, representative of North Korean People! Urgent Action Network (RENK) and demanded that these NGO members be handed over to the North.

On the issue of Megumi Yokota's ashes, Japanese officials rebutted by citing two factors: 1) The man who handed the ashes to Japan identified himself as Megumi's husband, but his identity

is in doubt; and 2) it is the North Korean officials' job to determine the cause of why more than one DNA traces were detected. Japan refused to hand the named NGO members to the North. After the talks, Japan's chief negotiator Umeda told reporters: "With no convincing reply from North Korean officials, the gap was not bridged. This is extremely regrettable." Umeda criticized North Korea's response.

In the morning session yesterday, both negotiators were engaged for the first time in full-fledged discussion on the security

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issues, including nuclear and missile development.

Japan called on North Korea to rejoin the six-party talks on North Korea's nuclear issue unconditionally. In the talks on the missile issue, too, Japan called for the continuation of the missile-launching moratorium as specified in the 2002 Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration, demanding that the North stop developing missiles and scrap them. The North Korean negotiators agreed on the importance of the six-party talks, but insisted; "We won't return to the six-party talks unless the United States removes economic sanctions now imposed on us."

A plenary meeting is set to occur this morning. Both the negotiating teams are expected to assess the results of all the negotiations this time. Late yesterday, a high-level Japanese official indicated an outlook that this round of negotiations would close tomorrow, noting: "Given no progress on the abduction issue, continuing talks is of no use."

5) Failure of parallel talks overshadows the future course of dialogue

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

Toyoufumi Amano, Beijing

The parallel negotiation formula was introduced into this round of the dialogue between the Japanese and North Korean governments, but the negotiations did not proceed as Japan expected and foundered.

The negotiation formula Japan had initially charted was to discuss three subjects simultaneously and on the same day. The point in this formula was to put pressure on North Korea to concede by linking talks on the abduction issue Japan has emphasized to talks on the nuclear and missile issues.

However, in a plenary session on Feb. 4, North Korean officials refused to follow this formula. Negotiations came to be held with one subject for one day, ending up with each subject detached from the others. The dialogue proceeded in a way that was far from Japan's initial plan, which was to negotiate flexibly while seeing the North's reaction.

With no progress on the abduction issue, calls for economic sanctions seem likely to flare up in the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and other quarters in Japan. The Foreign Ministry is cautious about sanctions, thinking that they would not be effective without cooperation from other nations, such as China and Russia. But it is certain that Japan's dialogue line will be affected by the outcome of the negotiations with the North this time.

Meeting reporters late yesterday, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi said: "We are making efforts to resolve the abduction issue as well as the nuclear and missile issues, but the gap is still wide. It's difficult indeed." At a press conference, Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe referred to North Korea's rejection of Japan's proposal for "the settlement of past accounts" by providing economic cooperation and criticized the North's response. Abe stated: "That way of thinking is specified in the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. I want the North Koreans to

have a clear understanding of that point."

6) Prime minister skips annual Northern Territories rally, sparking questions about interest in territorial issue

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

A national rally to demand the return of the northern territories was held in Tokyo yesterday under the sponsorship of the government and private groups. Prime Minister Koizumi did not attend the rally citing ongoing Diet deliberations as the reason. There was no reading of the prime minister's speech by proxy, either. Seeing this, many participants were heard questioning the prime minister's eagerness to resolve the stalled territorial issue. The prime minister was also absent from the annual rally last year with a cold. According to the Cabinet Office, the prime minister's absence from the rally for two consecutive years is the first time for a prime minister since 1981, when such attendance was started. No reading of the prime minister's speech by proxy is also unprecedented.

In the rally, New Komeito House of Councillors meeting Hisashi Kazama referred to the fact that there was no progress on the northern territorial issue during the Japan-Russia summit last November. He said: "The prime minister should have come here and said, 'I'm sorry,'" getting applause from the audience. Journalist Yoshiko Sakurai also criticized the prime minister: "The prime minister's absence for the second straight year might give the wrong political message to Russia."

On the Northern Territorial issue, Japan's assertion is that Japan and Russia should conclude a peace treaty after resolving the issue of claims to the four territories based on the 1993 Tokyo Declaration. But Russia insists that it returns only the Habomai and Shikotan islands to Japan after the two countries conclude a peace treaty based on the 1956 Japan-Soviet Union Joint Declaration.

7) Singapore's senior minister urges Koizumi to discontinue Yasukuni visits, describing Japan as diplomatically isolated

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

Izumi Ogura, Singapore

Singapore's Senior Minister Goh Chok Tong, a former prime minister, delivering a keynote speech at the Feb. 6 Asia-Pacific Roundtable, strongly urged Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and other Japanese cabinet ministers to stop visiting Yasukuni Shrine. He said:

"Japanese leaders should stop visiting the shrine and think of other ways to pay respect to the war dead, excluding war criminals. As far as this issue is concerned, Japan is diplomatically isolated."

8) Government to present a bill amending the Immigration Control Law to fingerprint foreigners aged over 16 in principle

MAINICHI (Page 1) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

The government is planning to present to the current Diet session a bill to amend the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Law with the aim of preventing terrorist attacks. The bill is designed to obligate foreigners aged over 16 to be fingerprinted in principle when going through immigration. In order to block terrorists from entering Japan, a provision will also be added to the law to allow authorities to deport those who have been

designated by the justice minister as individuals who might commit crimes that threaten public security.

Fingerprinting will be exempted for the following: (1) special permanent foreign residents, such as ethnic Korean residents in Japan; (2) those under age 16; (3) those visiting Japan on diplomatic or official business; and (4) governmental guests and others. The Justice Ministry is also considering an ordinance requiring the collection of facial images, in addition to fingerprinting. Fingerprints and other data will be stored on the computer system to allow immigration officers to check them against fingerprints of those who have been deported in the past in order to prevent them from reentering Japan. Upon request by investigative authorities, data will be used in criminal investigations.

Authorities will be allowed to deport those who have been designated by the justice minister as individuals who might commit such crimes as murder and hijacking for the purpose of posing a threat to the country that are specified in the legislation for punishing those who provide funds to terrorists. Those who make preparations for or assist such crimes will also be deported. In addition, ships and planes will be required to present their lists of passengers before arriving in Japan.

Although the United States has already adopted the immigration fingerprinting system, the introduction of the system in Japan is likely to spark controversy, as the Japan Federation of Bar Associations (JFBA) and other organizations are opposed to it. A JFBA source expressed opposition to the use of such data in criminal investigations, saying: "Fingerprinting violates the Constitution stipulating respect for individuals and the code of freedom. Such will violate privacy and disturb the formation of our society where Japanese people are living side by side with foreigners."

9) New Komeito halts discussion on raising JDA to ministry status until investigation of DFAA for bid-rigging is ended

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Excerpt)  
February 8, 2006

The New Komeito yesterday held a meeting of its national security department and agreed to an unified position on discussion in the Diet on raising the status of the Japan Defense Agency (JDA) to a ministry that has been halted since the beginning of the year: "The hearings should not be held until the truth and the situation about bid-rigging by the Defense Facilities Administration Agency (DFAA) is cleared up." After the meeting, department chairman Shigeki Sato told the press: "When the investigation winds up, we should once more properly discuss in a calm atmosphere." He indicated that discussion on the issue of raising JDA to a ministry status would be put off.

10) Realignment talks to start tomorrow

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MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

The government announced yesterday that Japan and the United States would hold senior-working-level consultations in Tokyo Feb. 9-10 to discuss the planned realignment of US forces in Japan.

The realignment talks will take place with the participation of the Foreign Ministry's North American Affairs Bureau Deputy Director General Kazuyoshi Umemoto, the Defense Agency's Defense Policy Bureau Deputy Director General Hironori Kanazawa, and other officials on the Japanese side, and Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Lawless and others on the US side.

11) Japan, US discuss building alternative in Urasoe for US military's Naha port facility

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

The Japanese and US governments are looking into the possibility of building an alternative facility in the city of Urasoe, Okinawa Prefecture, to take over the functions of a US military port facility in the city of Naha in the island prefecture, officials said yesterday. The two governments have agreed to return the Naha port facility to Japan.

Last October, the Japanese and US governments released an interim report on the realignment of US forces in Japan. The interim report incorporated a plan to consolidate US military bases located in the central and southern parts of Okinawa Prefecture. The alternative port facility plan was once scrapped but came up again out of consideration for local communities.

12) US to ask Japan to bear 75% of cost required for relocating US Marines to Guam

ASAHI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

Yoichi Kato, Washington

The US Defense Department, estimating that the relocation of US Marines from Okinawa to Guam as part of the planned realignment of US forces in Japan would cost 8 billion dollars (940 billion yen) in total, has begun making arrangement to ask Japan to bear 75% of that cost, a source familiar with the US government revealed yesterday.

Although the US government is considering removing 7,000 to 8,000 troops and the command of the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force (III MEF) to Guam, the island lacks facilities to accommodate them. The source said that 8 billion dollars is a rough estimate required for building such facilities.

According to the source, because the budget for building Marine Corps facilities is set about at 100 million dollars annually, it would take the US nearly 20 years to complete the planned relocation even with some assistance from Japan. "In order to realize the relocation more quickly, we will have to ask the Japanese government to shoulder a substantial portion of the

TOKYO 00000693 008 OF 013

cost," a Pentagon official said. The US aims to complete the relocation by 2012.

But because the US did not come up with this estimate by adding up individual facilities, Japan is asking for detailed plans and estimates.

Tokyo and Washington intend to determine their shares of costs for the relocation by the end of March, when they are scheduled to produce a final report on US force realignment.

13) Iwakuni poll set for Mar. 12 over US carrier-borne aircraft redeployment

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

The city of Iwakuni in Yamaguchi Prefecture will officially announce a plebiscite on March 5, with voting and vote counting scheduled for March 12, over the planned redeployment of carrier-borne fighter jets from the US Navy's Atsugi base to the US Marine Corps' Iwakuni base. Iwakuni Mayor Katsusuke Ihara initiated the plebiscite yesterday to ask citizens if they will accept the redeployment. Meanwhile, the heads of seven municipalities, which will consolidate with Iwakuni City on March 20, presented Ihara with a resolution yesterday afternoon opposing the plebiscite.

14) Minshuto head Maehara rebuts US meatpacker's demand for apology over party delegation's report citing insufficient safety

procedures

YOMIURI (Page 4) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

Democratic Party of Japan's (Minshuto) delegation recently visited the facility of Tyson Foods, the largest meat processor of the US, and reported: "Japan's safety criteria are not being observed." In reaction, the American company has demanded an apology from the party and a retraction of the view. On this issue, party head Maehara refuted Tyson Foods: "I received the report and also watched a video tape. It is undeniably true (that the company is not observing safety procedures). Tyson's protest is way off-base, and we will make a resolute response."

15) Beef trade: OIE proposals for new guidelines come under fire at BSE experts' meeting as biased toward exporting countries

MAINICHI (Page 9) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) yesterday held a meeting of BSE experts and unveiled new beef trade guidelines, which the Office of International des Epizooties (OIE) presented to its member nations. It turned out that the set of proposals proposed by the world organization for animal health had modified the existing guidelines, such as that it removed the condition that boneless beef traded without any restriction be limited to cattle aged up to 30 months. A number of participants voiced criticism of the proposed standards. The OIE will discuss the propriety of revising the beef trade guidelines in a plenary session to be held in May.

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The present beef trade guidelines include a condition that tradable boneless beef should be free from any suspicion of BSE contamination or any such contamination has not been confirmed. But this condition has been replaced with a condition that boneless beef can be exported, if it passes inspections, including eye inspections, by exporting countries. The adoption of new guidelines will mean that there will remain almost no trade restrictions, except for the removal of specified risk materials (SRM). The surveillance obligation to check contamination status has also been eased. The package of new guidelines is thus advantageous for beef-exporting countries, such as the US.

The package drew a number of critical remarks, some stating that the BSE agent can accumulate in meat as well, and others saying there is no valid reason to remove the age restriction -- previously limited to cattle up to 30 months of age -- from the guidelines. Some argued that the new guidelines were not based on scientific grounds.

16) Agriculture Minister Nakagawa suggests possibility of prior inspections of US meat plants at time of resumption of US beef imports

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 5) (Excerpt)  
February 8, 2006

Speaking before the House of Representatives Budget Committee on Feb. 7, Minister of Agriculture Shoichi Nakagawa stated that the government was considering possibly carrying out prior inspections of meat-processing facilities inside the United States at the time of the resumption of US beef imports. He was asked by Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) lawmaker Yoriyoshi Matsuno, "We would like you to think about to restarting imports under the condition of first carrying out local inspections to see if the situation is all right." Nakagawa answered, "I will take your suggestion fully seriously and give it consideration."

17) US irritated at "Japan's overreaction" to import violation



YOMIURI (Page 11) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

Following Japan's second ban on US beef imports, a perception gap over food safety between Japan and the US has stood out in bold relief. The Japanese government intends to call on the US to thoroughly check its inspection system, but people affected by the matter in the US are increasingly irritated at Japan's response, calling it "excessive."

In a meeting of the House of Representatives Budget Committee yesterday, a member of the Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) said that the government's decision late last year to resume US beef imports was too hasty. In response, Health, Labor, and Welfare Minister Kawasaki said: "The insufficiency of the safety procedures being taken by the US (including the requirement of removing specified risk materials) has been pointed out. We will discuss such problems with the US." Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Minister Nakagawa also reiterated his determination to take all possible measures to prevent BSE, saying: "Even if US safety measures are judged proper, if there is something more that can be done to ensure food safety, we will discuss it."

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Just after Japan's reimposition of the ban, the US was at a loss regarding Japan's criticism of the US, as seen from the remark made by US Agriculture Under Secretary J. B. Penn: "The risk of BSE is much lower than that of getting into an auto accident." Now that there are signs of the issue being protracted, however, such bewilderment is turning into irritation. Tyson Foods, the largest meat processor in the US, called for Minshuto's apology yesterday for its earlier announcement in which it said the party had confirmed that Japan's safety criteria were not being observed. A Minshuto executive fiercely reacted to the protest, claiming, "It is groundless and way off-base." The move by a meatpacker represents growing frustration in the US. Japan will not be able to easily resume imports this time, but the US is expected to urge Japan to reopen its market at an early date, stressing the recent Beef Export Verification violation as a technical mistake. Should the current situation persist, dissatisfaction in the US with Japan may grow stronger.

18) USDA to shrink BSE inspections to one-tenth of previous level, with no request for funds in budget

TOKYO (Page 3) (Excerpt)  
February 8, 2006

Jiji Press, Washington

A spokesman for the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) revealed on Feb. 6 that in the Department's portion of the 2007 budget request President Bush presented to the Congress, a request for funding to continue expanded inspections for BSE was omitted. USDA is now considering revising its expanded inspection regime, so if the budget stands as is, the US' BSE inspections will shrink to a level of one tenth of the annual 40,000 head level that it has been until now.

19) FTA talks with India to start

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) yesterday revealed its plan to enter free trade agreement (FTA) talks with India. Once coordination of views with the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries is over, the leaders of the two countries will aim to reach a formal agreement to launch negotiations. For Japan, this is going to be the first FTA talks with one of the influential developing countries called BRICs, a term that indicates Brazil, Russia, India, and China.

India's economy is continuing to grow, boosted by the information and technology (IT) industry. The nation has the second largest

population, following China. The amount of trade between Japan and India, however, has remained small. Japan exports machinery parts to that nation and imports iron ore. However, as a trade partner India in 2004 ranked 25th in terms of export value and 29th in terms of import trade value. At work behind Japan's move to start FTA talks with India is that it wants to increase trade and investment ties with that nation with an eye on its huge market.

Japan and India had set up a joint study group consisting of those representing industrial, government and academic circles.

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The panel in July 2005 started looking into the possibility of the two countries signing an FTA.

20) US sets forth int'l control plan for nuclear fuel recycling: Japan may be criticized for "special treatment"

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 3) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

On Feb. 6, the day before Japan restarted its plutothermal program, the United States announced a plan to resume the halted nuclear fuel cycle reprocessing. With Iran and other countries in mind, the United States aims to place nuclear fuel reprocessing for plutonium under international control. However, if this initiative goes on, special treatment given to Japan, which has promoted its own nuclear fuel cycle under the US umbrella, could stand out internationally.

Japan has proceeded with its nuclear fuel cycle under the United States' agreement. Although Japan is not a nuclear power, it has its own nuclear fuel cycle facilities. This is a unique case.

"The United States has explained that Japan is not subject to international control," said an official of the Nuclear Energy Policy Planning Division of the Agency for Natural Resources and Energy. However, the Japanese government wants to push ahead with its stagnated plutothermal power plan in order to keep up its nuclear fuel recycling policy. Japan envisions working together with the United States in developing reprocessing technologies that cannot easily be diverted to weapons, as well as in developing advanced nuclear reactors. In the future, the government will also look into the feasibility of providing nuclear power plant fuel to countries that abandon nuclear weapons development.

However, developing countries that are eager to have their own nuclear fuel cycle may critically wonder why Japan alone is not under international control.

21) Minshuto's attack on government fails to score hit at Lower House Budget Committee sessions

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Excerpts)  
February 8, 2006

At a House of Representatives Budget Committee session yesterday, the incumbent and former presidents of the main opposition party Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) took the floor as questioners. The two representatives from the largest opposition party strongly pursued the government on the US beef import issue, the earthquake-resistance data falsification scam, and the Livedoor scandal.

However, they failed to obtain Diet testimony by Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmaker Kosuke Ito. Minshuto has placed a high priority on this goal. They were also unable to undermine the government's conventional answers to questions about the US beef issue. In an attempt to strengthen its defense, the government held a regular cabinet meeting one day earlier than due. There seems to be an increasing sense of frustration in Minshuto even though the party now feels like it is riding high.

Incumbent President Seiji Maehara, who took the floor as the

first questioner, tenaciously pursued the Japanese side's responsibility for having made a decision to resume US beef imports last December.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, however, just reiterated: "The United States did not observe the bilateral agreement. The Japanese government has handled the matter properly."

Maehara then questioned, "Have you raised a protest against President Bush?" Koizumi fended him off by responding, "I decide on the rank of the official to whom I talk. I don't need any advice."

Yorihisa Matsuno, who lured "inconsistent answers" from Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Minister Shoichi Nakagawa at the previous Budget Committee session, attacked again Nakagawa and Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe. The only answer he obtained from them was "The resumption of US beef imports do not violate the cabinet decision."

Sumio Mabuchi pursued the earthquake-proof data falsification scam, posing alleged financial scandal involving Ito's found management organization. Land, Infrastructure and Transport Minister Kazuo Kitagawa categorically said, "Mr. Ito has not at all interfered in our ministry's business."

22) Former Minshuto Okada takes the floor at Lower House Budget Committee, engaging in battle of words with Prime Minister Koizumi over Livedoor scandal

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Full)  
February 8, 2006

At a session yesterday of the House of Representatives Budget Committee, Katsuya Okada, former president of Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), engaged in a battle of words with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi regarding the fact senior Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) members supported former Livedoor Corp. President Takafumi Horie (who has been arrested on suspicion of violating the securities law). Okada took the floor as a questioner at the Lower House Budget Committee for the first time since he quit the presidency to take responsibility for the party having been defeated in last September Lower House election.

In the session Okada explained that he had decided not to ask Horie to run in the election when he had met him. He said, "He was not a person whom Minshuto could back in the election." He pressed Koizumi: "Don't you feel responsibility for those who bought Livedoor stocks believing Horie, whom the LDP supported the election?"

Koizumi responded, saying, "I am forced take criticism that Koizumi, who was unable get an insight into the real character of the person, was foolish." Regarding the connection between his election support for Horie and Livedoor's stock price, he said, "They are separate matters. I neither recommended the (Livedoor's) shares nor said the stock price would jump."

23) Government mulling postponement of submitting to current Diet session bill revising Imperial House Law

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 1) (Excerpts)

February 8, 2006

Following the news that Princess Kiko, the wife of Emperor Akihito's second son, is pregnant, the government yesterday started looking into the possibility of giving up submitting to the ongoing Diet session a bill to revise the Imperial House Law to allow female imperial family members and their descendants to

ascend to the imperial throne. If the expected baby is male, he will be third in line to the throne (after Crown Prince Naruhito, 45, and Prince Akishino, 40, under the current succession rule). The move follows growing opinion in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party favoring caution regarding the revision bill.

Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi discussed how to handle the bill yesterday with Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe. They confirmed that preparations for submitting the bill should be moved ahead as planned and that the prime minister would make a final decision on whether to submit the bill or not while giving consideration to debate on the bill in the LDP, as well as to the trends of public opinion.

Abe stated in a press conference last night, "I think various views will be raised regarding a report drafted by a group of experts on the Imperial House Law and this good news." He indicated in his remarks that the government would make a judgment on whether to submit the bill to the current Diet session after seeing the development of discussions in the LDP.

Abe had emphasized the government's policy of presenting the bill to the ongoing regular Diet session. If the government does so, he stressed that the LDP should bind party members to vote according to its decision. The government is now taking a cautious stance toward the submission of the bill.

SCHIEFFER